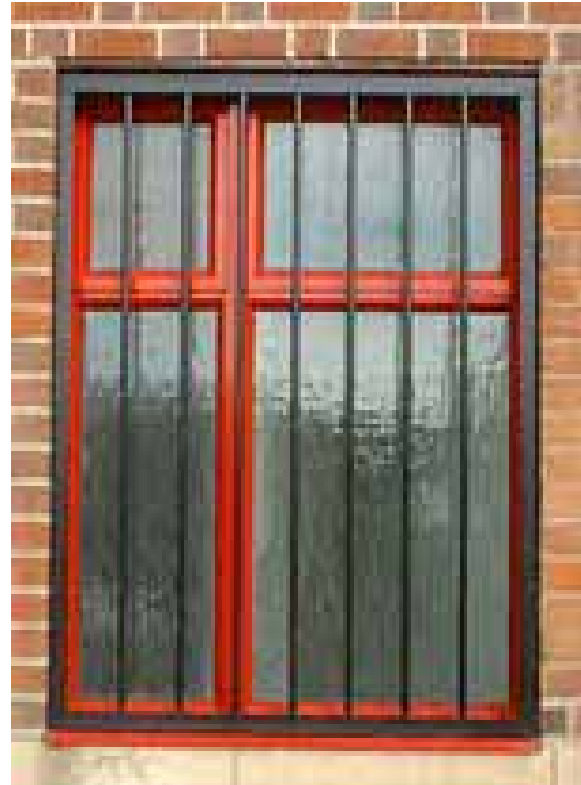


Security Bars

Burglar bars, also known as security or window bars, can be found on any type of structure; single-family home, apartment building or storefronts.



Security Bars



The bars provide a visible sign of security serving as both a deterrent to potential burglars, and a reassurance to those who had the bars installed.



Security Bars



72 people died in a fire on August 18, 2001.
Most of the victims were trapped inside the
six-story hotel by anti-burglar bars.

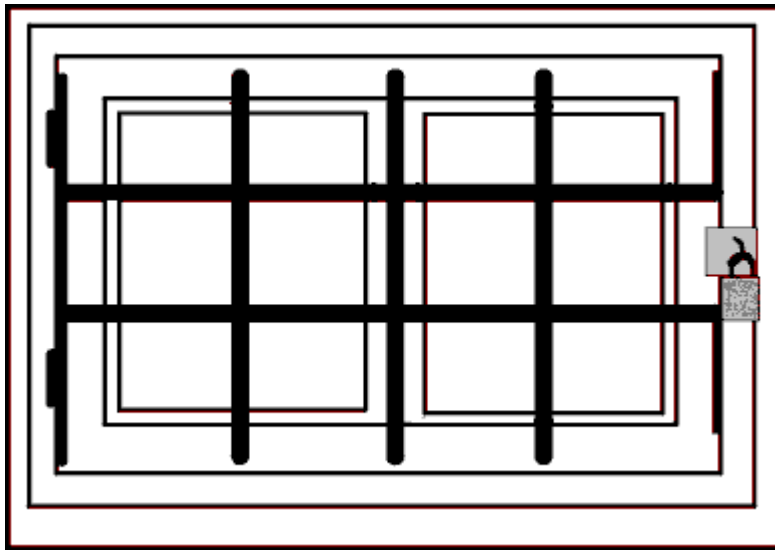
However, Burglar bars
can also be
dangerous,
preventing residents
and other occupants
from escaping in the
event of a fire and
leading to fatalities.

Based on data obtained from the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), on average about 25 civilians are injured or die each year in fires where escape is compromised by unauthorized bars or gates. South Florida had 13 fatalities in 2004 that were attributed to fires in homes with security bars.

Most fatalities / injuries involving burglar bars occur in residences when people become entrapped by the very bars that are supposed to protect them.

Children, the elderly, the mobility impaired, and firefighters are especially vulnerable.





The bars can also hamper rescue efforts, especially the efforts of those who arrive before public safety personnel.

The stories are tragic. Small children trapped inside burning homes separated from safety and rescuers by security bars. In the past decade, there have been many horrific incidents of people being trapped in fires.

While the number of fire deaths in America is on the decline, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) notes the number of fire deaths related to improper security bars is on the rise.

Sense of Security



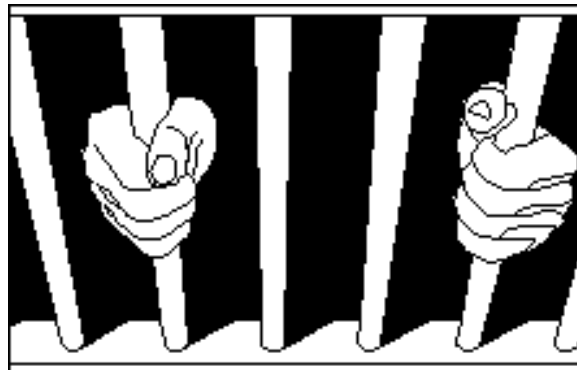
The fear of burglary, theft, and/or physical attack presents a greater perceived risk with people than the threat of fire.

Sense of Security

Research has shown that people feel they have a greater risk of being robbed than being trapped in a fire. Reports in the media accentuate this fear, as robberies are generally more well-publicized than fires.

Sense of Security

The installation of the bars leads to the creation of a prison-like condition. The occupants may feel safe, but they have severely limited their avenues of egress.



Sense of Security

There has been a requirement for sleeping rooms to have operable windows that open from the inside without the use of special tools, to allow separate ways of escape, since 1968 in South Florida.

Florida Building Code 1005

Special Exit Requirements

1005.4 Emergency escape and rescue openings

§1005.4.1 Every sleeping room located on the first, second and third story or within basements of Group R (residential) occupancies shall have at least one exterior emergency escape and rescue opening.

Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Requirements



1. Such windows shall be openable from the inside without the use of tools and shall provide a clear opening of not less than 20 in. (51 cm) in width, 24 in. (61 cm) in height, and 5.7 ft² (0.53 m²) in area.

Quick-Release Devices

Every family member should be able to open quick-release security bars without the use of a key, special knowledge or effort. There are several different types of releases available.



Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Requirements

2. The bottom of the opening shall be not more than 44 in. (112 cm) above the floor, and any latching device shall be capable of being operated from not more than 54 in. (137 cm) above the finished floor.

Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Requirements

3. The clear opening shall allow a rectangular solid, with a width and height that provides not less than the required 5.7 ft² (0.53 m²) opening and a depth not less than 20 in. (51 cm), to pass fully through the opening.



Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Requirements

4. Such windows shall be accessible by the fire department and shall open into an area having access to a public way.

Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Exceptions

Emergency escape and rescue openings shall not be required in buildings protected throughout by an approved automatic sprinkler system.



Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Exceptions

Emergency escape and rescue openings shall not be required if the room or space has a door leading directly to the outside of the building.



Florida Building Code

1005.4.2 Exceptions

Emergency escape and rescue openings shall not be required for rooms located higher than three stories above grade.



Florida Building Code

1005.4.3 Maximum height from floor

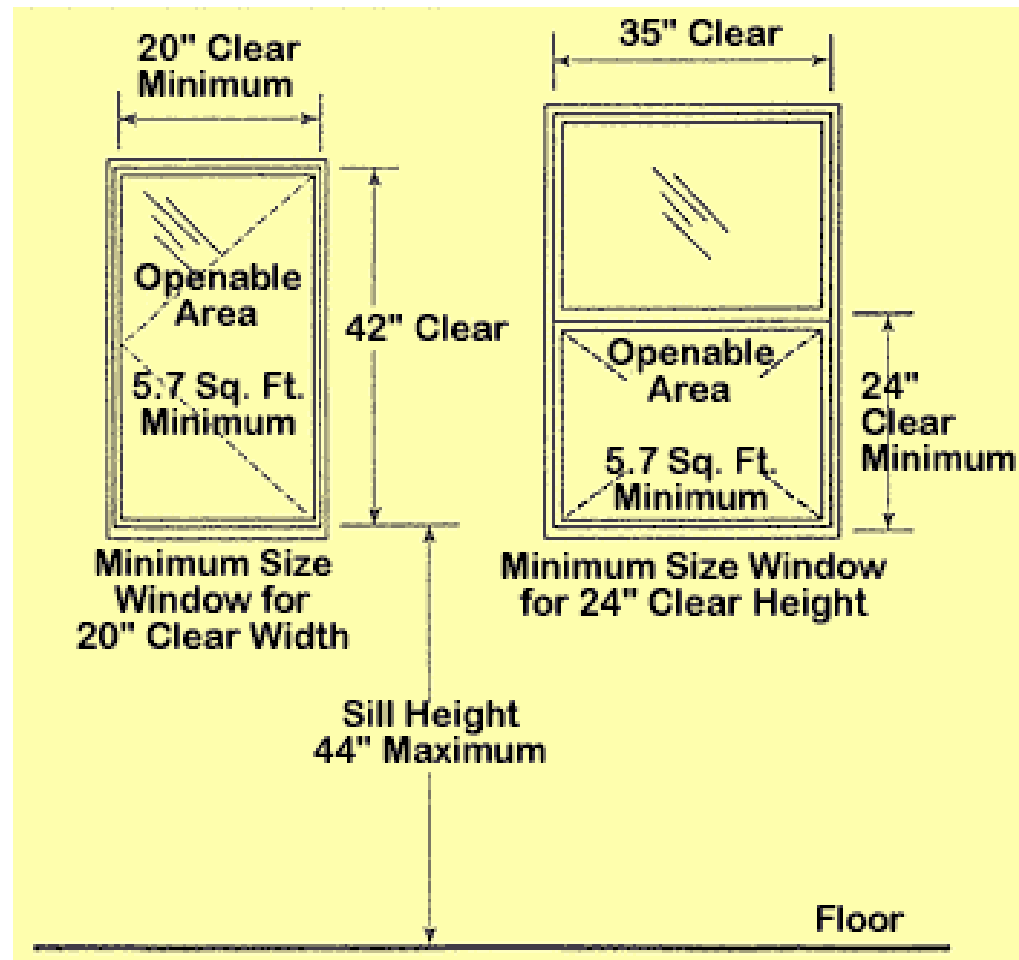


The emergency escape and rescue opening shall have a sill height of not more than 44 inches (1118 mm) above the floor.

Florida Building Code

1005.4.4 Minimum size

The minimum net clear opening height dimension shall be 24 inches (610 mm). The minimum net clear opening width dimension shall be 20 inches (508 mm). The minimum net clear opening area shall be 5.7 sq. ft. (0.53 m²).



Florida Building Code

1005.4.4 Exception

Ground floor openings shall be permitted to have a minimum net clear opening of 5.0 sq. ft. (047m²).

Summary

Don't let the very bars that you installed to protect your valuables cost you and your family their lives in the event of fire!